DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 139 209 EC 100 784

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TITLE Personnel Training to Facilitate Mainstreaming.
PUB DATE Apr 77
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the Annual International Convention, The Council for Exceptional Children (55th, Atlanta, Georgia, April 11-15, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Demonstration Projects; Elementary Secondary Education; Exceptional Child Education; *Handicapped Children; Inservice Teacher Education; Interagency Cooperation; *Regular Class Placement

ABSTRACT

A model program for mainstreaming handicapped students is discussed in terms of the cooperative relationship between a local education agency and an institution of higher education, and in terms of the rationale behind the in-service training program entitled "Personnel Training to Facilitate Mainstreaming". (SBH)

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ED139209

P69 Session 301
Friday

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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PERSONNEL TRAINING TO FACILITATE MAINSTREAMING

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A paper presented at the

55th Annual International Convention

The Council for Exceptional Children

Atlanta, Georgia

15 April 1977

EC100 784

PERSONNEL TRAINING TO FACILITATE MAINSTREAMING

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Increased options for the educational placement of handicapped children are rapidly becoming a reality in many school districts. Many of these options are referred to as mainstreaming programs. The purpose of this presentation is to describe the development of one system which has led to the development of a model program for mainstreaming handicapped pupils.

Before going further it is appropriate to define our use of the term "mainstreaming." As used by this panel, mainstreaming is defined as the placement of a handicapped pupil in a regular class as their home classroom with the provision of appropriate educational support for both the pupil and his/her teacher. The educational support provided by the Jackson County Intermediate Education District includes both an educational resource center program and an in-service training program for regular classroom teachers.

My role on the panel is:

1. to describe how a serendipitous relationship between a local education agency (LEA) and an institution of higher education (IHE) was capitalized upon to facilitate the goals of both agencies, and
2. to describe the rationale behind the in-service training program entitled "Personnel Training to Facilitate Mainstreaming."

Your second panelist will describe the Educational Resource Center program. The third panelist will describe the in-service training program provided

regular educators. Together, the two presentations to follow will operationalize for you the support system provided the mainstreamed handicapped pupils and teachers in Jackson County, Oregon.

The LEA-IHE Relationship

Cooperative relationships between local education agencies and institutions of higher education are frequently more myth than reality. The reality of the Jackson County IED--University of Oregon relationship grew over a period of three years. The relationship grew because staff from both agencies could learn from one another and enjoyed working together.

Jackson County Intermediate Education District provides special education services for a regular school population of 24,000 students. Located in the Rogue Valley in Southern Oregon, Jackson County IED serves a largely rural school population. The district office is located in Medford, Oregon. Medford is approximately 170 miles (and 3 1/2 hours driving time) from Eugene. The Special Education Department at the University of Oregon in Eugene is the Oregon IHE special education program closest to Medford.

The IED has provided local districts with Special Education services for a considerable length of time. Blessed by their splendid isolation from a major university, the IED's Director of Special Education, Mr. Cornelius Feskens, has provided the leadership needed for the development of high quality special education programs. It was only after the IED had exemplary programs in operation that we IHE "types" became involved with their program.

The Special Education program at the University of Oregon became

involved with the IED for two basic reasons:

1. IED employed special education teachers needed additional University coursework to obtain or maintain their special education certification.
2. faculty at the University believed that it would be both professionally and politically wise to be of assistance to a major district in a remote area of the state.

As we grew to know one another better it also became clear that we, at the University, could learn a considerable amount about good special education practice by learning from the IED staff.

The current relationship evolved from a request for an extension class on exceptional children to be taught at the IED in Spring, 1974. During the course of that class, it became apparent that a University of Oregon staff member could profitably do a number of things at the IED. These things included (a) learning more about the IED programs; (b) providing omsbudsperson service to local teachers with respect to certification and enrollment in University of Oregon programs; and (c) serving as a sounding board for IED program development plans.

As a result of that first course in the Spring of 1974, the Department of Special Education at the University of Oregon has offered a course at the IED each term of each academic year since 1974. These courses have included both certification and University of Oregon master's degree core courses. In addition, we have continued to serve as an omsbudsperson and part-time planner. Information gained through working with the IED has been incorporated in the appropriate courses at the University.

Rationale for the In-Service Grant

As stated earlier, University of Oregon faculty served as a sounding board for program planning. In the summer of 1974, IED staff were developing five year goals for their special education program. One goal was the continued implementation of their resource room program. During the first several years of the resource room program, the staff identified a small, but persistent problem which they found difficult to overcome.

Most regular classroom teachers were accepting of the resource room program and the handicapped children assigned to their classrooms. This was particularly true for handicapped pupils who were from the attendance area served by the school. Handicapped pupils from outside the building's attendance area were bused to those schools having resource rooms. These pupils were not as readily accepted by the regular class teacher. For this and other reasons, IED staff concluded that a reasonable long term goal for the program was the provision of appropriate educational services for each handicapped pupil within his/her own local school.

To accomplish this goal, IED staff concluded that in addition to expanding the resource room program, a second source of support needed to be provided for the regular classroom teacher. That second source of support was the development of an on-going in-service training program designed to provide the regular class teacher with those skills s/he felt were needed to assist him/her to teach handicapped pupils assigned to their classroom.

While the IED desired to implement an in-service training program, they did not have the local funds need to mount such an effort. It was

at this point where we at the University were able to make substantial contributions to the IED program. A member of our staff--me--assisted the IED staff with the preparation of a special project training grant application which was submitted to and funded, on a pilot basis, by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped. This special project grant is providing some of the assistance needed by the IED to implement and refine their in-service training program. We, at the University of Oregon, are continuing to participate in the program in teaching, planning, and evaluation roles.

Concluding Comments

Through the simple request for a continuing education course in the Spring of 1974, a close and effective working relationship between a LEA and an IHE has developed. Through this relationship resources which are peculiar to IHE's have been brought to bear on the solution of problems confronting a small, rural, special education program. Through this relationship the preparation of students at the IHE has been enriched.

I can no longer conceive of being a practicing University level special educator without my also being a practicing LEA special educator. Through such partnership the promise of the future for handicapped children can become the reality we desire.

Thank you.